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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [EUN](#) [EI](#)
SUBJECT: ADVANCING IRELAND'S LEADERSHIP ON GUANTANAMO

REF: DUBLIN 038

Classified By: CDA ROBERT J FAUCHER. REASONS 1.4 (b/d)

¶1. (S) Conor Lenihan, Irish Minister of State at the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, with special responsibility for Integration Policy and Resettlement, called on the Charge January 29 to discuss a decision paper he was putting together for the Prime Minister and Cabinet that would recommend Ireland's accepting up to ten detainees from Guantanamo. He hoped the paper would go forward in the first week of February for a decision and announcement by February 21. Lenihan acknowledged that divisions remain in the Irish cabinet, with Irish Foreign Minister Martin pressing the argument in favor of accepting the detainees and announcing it early and Justice Minister Ahern leading the faction that prefers to wait for a common EU position for Ireland to act. Lenihan aligned himself with Martin and declared deep frustration at the lack of EU action on Guantanamo at the January 26 EU Foreign Ministers' Council meeting in Brussels. He felt it imperative that Ireland lead on this issue and in any case not wait to announce its intentions until the expected traditional U.S.-Ireland bilateral meeting at the White House on St. Patrick's Day (March 17).

¶2. (C) Irish Foreign Affairs Department Political Director Rory Montgomery told the Charge January 30 that Foreign Minister Martin also was dissatisfied with the results of the luncheon discussion at the January 26 Council meeting. Nevertheless, Martin left the meeting with the general sense that Ireland's EU partners agreed that the EU should find ways to respond positively to the President's recent Guantanamo closure announcement. Martin told his EU counterparts that Ireland is willing to accept detainees, which he stressed flowed logically from their calls for Guantanamo's closure. Montgomery stated that, with the shift in the Irish Justice Department's position toward accepting detainees, no one in the Irish Cabinet was arguing against it. Justice Minister Ahern, however, wants to act only upon an EU common position, which "won't come any sooner than the end of the Czech EU presidency in June," according to Montgomery, "and this was not acceptable." An Irish announcement would likely come between now and St. Patrick's Day, he declared.

¶3. (S) Lenihan and Montgomery separately told the Charge that presentation of the issue by the President and the Secretary of State in the weeks ahead would greatly impact the abilities of Ireland and the EU to move forward on the detainee issue. They stressed the need for clarity about whether the U.S. itself would resettle any detainees. A strong, direct request to Ireland would generate a strong, direct response, they both predicted.

¶4. (S) Comment. Ireland is poised to move ahead of its EU partners and announce its intention to resettle detainees from Guantanamo. The Embassy will continue to work this issue but a call from the Secretary would likely generate a

positive response. Irish leaders clearly hope to maximize the political capital Ireland would earn from such a move and believe that an announcement prior to St. Patrick's Day would be preferred over making it a deliverable for any White House meeting.

FAUCHER